



Historic Perspectives

Preservation of Prince William County's Historic Resources

Winter 2024 Contents

- 1 | A Historic Year
- 3 | Image Spotlight
- 4 | History Corner
- 6 | Preservation Corner
- 7 | HPD News
- 8 | Symposium

PRINCE WILLIAM

Historic Preservation

Prince William County
Department of Parks & Recreation
Office of Historic Preservation

17674 Main Street
Dumfries, VA 22026

Phone (703) 792-1731
Fax (703) 221-7504

Contact us at:
historicpreservation@pwcgov.org

Visit our website at:
www.pwcva.gov/history

For Historic Property Rentals call:
(703) 792-5546

Facebook: pwhistoric

X: @PWHPF

Instagram: PWC_History

YouTube: Prince William Office of
Historic Preservation

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor in Chief:
Dan Goldstein

Contributors:
Rob Orrison, Lauren Maloy,
Jessica Maria Alecia, Kevin Pawlak,
Dan Goldstein

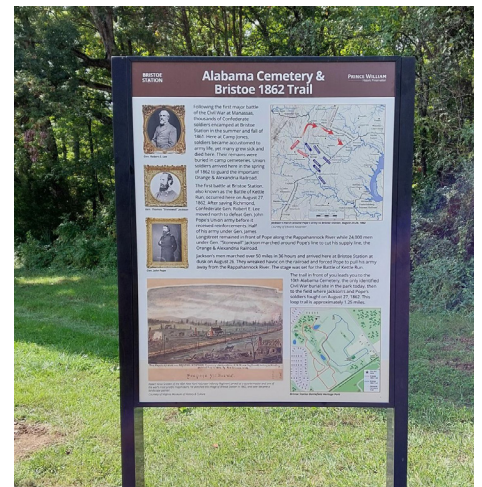
Copyright © 2025

A Historic Year: The Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation Year in Review

Founded in 2001, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) celebrated our 23rd year in preserving and interpreting Prince William County's history. Not only have we seen growth in attendance to events, programs, and tours, but also our education program has grown with a continued partnership with Prince William County Schools. We have surpassed our pre-pandemic level of attendance, and we continue to see expected future growth.

The organization continues to see great support from our County leadership. Several much-needed Capital Maintenance Projects were completed in this past year, including ADA improvements to the Rippon Lodge Office, revised interpretive signs at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, siding restoration and painting of the Haislip- Hall House at Brentsville, restoration of the rare 19th century corn crib barn at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, and exhibit enhancements at Rippon Lodge.

This year, staff completed two projects focused on two African American communities, Thoroughfare and The Settlement. These projects document the community through oral and archival history. The Historic Thoroughfare online exhibit allows people to dive deep into the community's history through



HP Staff

One of the new interpretive signs on the 1861-62 Trail at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park.

interviews, images, maps, and more. This exhibit won a Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award.

Of course, none of this is possible without our volunteers and community partners. Our volunteer program is now back to pre-pandemic levels in number of volunteers and hours donated. Our volunteers assist in providing tours, program assistance, research, trail work, and curatorial assistance. We hosted our 9th Annual History Symposium for the first time at the Manassas Museum, with co-sponsors Historic Prince William, Prince William Historic Foundation, and the Prince William County Historical Commission. We continue to build on a strong foundation of



JaVonne Pope

9th Annual History Symposium



HP Staff

Historic Communities Walking Tour at Dumfries



HP Staff

Historic Communities Walking Tour at Nokesville

community advocacy and partnerships.

In 2024, we kicked off our part of a nation-wide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States. Along with our community partners and the Local 250th Committee, we began our events with our 250th anniversary of the Prince William Resolves (June 6, 1774) here in Dumfries. The Resolves are the first example in Virginia of a local County resolving to resist British policies. This was one of the many steps towards the American Revolution and our eventual independence on July 4, 1776.

We also kicked off our Williams Ordinary project. This will include turning our main office, Williams Ordinary, into a cultural center and museum. The building will feature a new exhibit on Prince William County in the American Revolution and rotating exhibit space focusing on art, history, and local culture. Outside, our Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation is fundraising to construct a memorial plaza dedicated to those that lived in Prince William County during the American Revolution. We encourage you to donate to help bring this project to fruition by visiting our Foundation's website at: preservepw.org.

The year ended in a bang for OHP as the Prince William Board of County Supervisors voted to purchase several historic properties in December. These include the Ned Distiller House in Buckland. Ned Distiller was a Free Black man and built this house in the early 1800's. This is one of the earliest buildings built and owned by a free person of color. Secondly, the Board voted to add nearly 160 acres of preserved battlefield to Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park. All the parcels are south of the railroad and encompass land involved in both the Battle of Kettle Run (August 27, 1862) and the Battle of Bristoe Station (October 14, 1863). These new purchases not only increase the amount of culturally significant land preserved, but also adds to our narrative of Prince William County history.

We hope you continue to visit and support our sites and efforts. We have the privilege of serving a great community and a great history.

Rob Orrison

Manager, Office of Historic Preservation



Image Spotlight

Prince William County in the American Revolution

With the approach of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Prince William Office of Historic Preservation has been busy with planning new exhibits, events, and conducting research to commemorate this historic event. One recent research project highlighted the service of local Revolutionary War veterans. The map shown here is part of this project, serving as a visual representation of data from the Revolutionary War Roster. The roster itself is a list of American Revolutionary War veterans who were either born or enlisted in Prince William County.

Emily Miller, the 2024 Prince William County Historical Commission Intern, completed the research for this ambitious project. To start, she combed through primary sources such as size rolls, pension applications, land grant claims, and rosters. Emily supplemented these resources with secondary

resources and worked to find burial records for these veterans.

While this process may seem straightforward, Emily encountered some challenges. The research relied heavily on pension applications, which are dependent on the recollections of the veterans. For example, William Rose recalled a Captain Thomas Wells of a “15th Virginia Regiment” in his pension application, but further research did not show a Thomas Wells in this regiment. At times, veterans also mentioned common names that could be attributed to many different people, making it difficult to ascertain which person they were describing. “Captain Ewell” could mean Charles Ewell, Thomas Winder Ewell, or Jesse

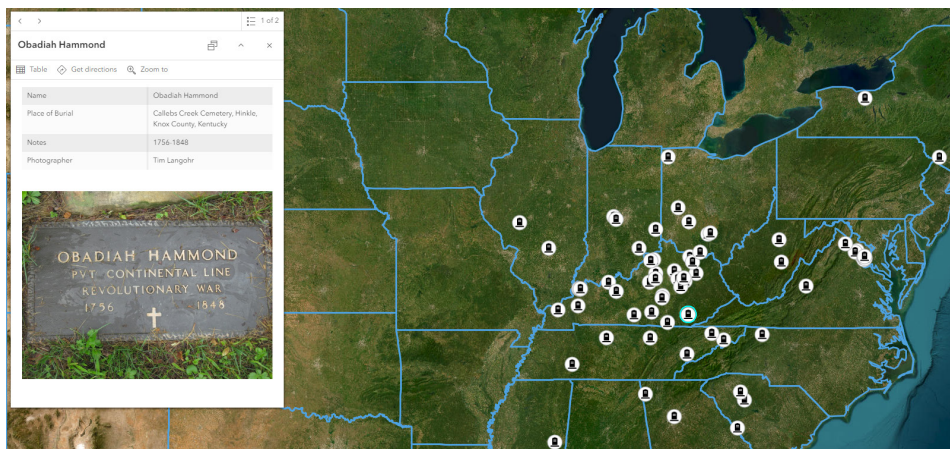
Ewell, all captains in the war.

Despite these challenges, Emily was able to develop a comprehensive roster and an associated index and annotated bibliography. To display data visually Emily worked with Planning Office Intern, William Temple, to create a GIS map of the burial locations of veterans. Emily was able to locate burial records for about a third of the veterans on the roster, and William plotted the points and attached pictures of the gravestones to each record, when available.

The research project has ended, but the Office of Historic Preservation will continue to add to and edit the roster and map as new entries are located. All of these resources can be viewed on a page dedicated to this project: www.pwcva.gov/departments/historic-preservation/prince-william-county-revolutionary-war-veterans. [To learn more about Prince William County and the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution visit va250.org/prince-william-county.

Lauren Maloy

Historic Communities Coordinator
Office of Historic Preservation





History Corner

“Let’s Hope It’s a Good One”: History of New Years

The ringing of church bells. Firework displays. Parties full of people, confetti and music. Times Square packed with folks anticipating a ball drop. Spending time with family or attending watch night mass. Midnight walks or first day hikes. Making resolutions that one may or may not keep. People bundled up at home watching television while others sleep another day away. There are many ways people either celebrate or choose not to partake in the ringing in of a new year. Regardless of modern-day traditions, the origin and the history of the “official” date of New Years proves that it has evolved throughout the centuries.

Some of the earliest records of any type of celebration to ring in a new year date as far back as 2000 BCE. In Mesopotamia, present day Turkey, Israel, Iraq and Syria, the new year began with the full moon of the vernal equinox in March. A vernal equinox is when the sun is exactly above the equator and both day and night are of equal length. For the Egyptians and Phoenicians, the next year began with the autumn equinox, which occurs in September. In ancient Greece, they celebrated the new year with the winter solstice, which



happens on December 21st. The Roman Republican Calendar for many years had the beginning of the new year also in March until 153 BCE. The original Roman calendar also consisted only of ten months and 304 days in a year. They apparently ignored the remaining sixty-one days, creating a sizable gap for the winter season. Those missing months were corrected with the introduction of the Julian calendar. Established by Julius Caesar around 40 BCE, the Roman Emperor was advised by an Alexandrian astronomer who introduced him to the Egyptian solar calendar. It had 365 and one-quarter days, was divided into 12 months and had even built in the leap year.

Yet even in medieval times, most of Christian Europe still regarded March 25th as the beginning of a new year, although Anglo Saxon England observed December 25th as New Year's Day. Not until 1582, with the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, would New Year's Day be firmly placed on January 1st. European countries gradually adopted this standardized calendar, with Scotland in 1660, Germany and Denmark in 1700, England in 1752 and finally in Russia in 1918. But that does not mean that every tradition or culture around the globe celebrates New Year's Day on the 1st of January.

Many cultures and countries still use the Lunar calendar to

¹Otherwise known as Midnight Mass in Catholic Tradition.

observe the beginning of a new year. The indigenous tribes of North America tie the beginning of the new year with the changing of the season. For the Jewish religion, the new year begins with Rosh Hashanah. The Muslim calendar celebrates the new year with the holy month of Muharram. The Chinese New Year is officially celebrated in late January or early February. In Japan, they celebrate the new year for three days, beginning on the 1st and ending on the 3rd. Some people in southern India and parts of Thailand celebrate the new year in early to mid-April. For all who celebrate it, special food, gatherings of families and friends, festive

parties and quiet moments of reflection are all the similarities carried through many traditions worldwide, regardless of the day and month.

In the end, New Year's is not just a date on a calendar, but another day for reflection, chance of possible prosperity, new or renewed hope, potential growth and change, a day of peace and quiet, and convictions for generous future days. As Eliza Cook once wrote in Song for the New Year:

"Old Time has turned another page
Of eternity and truth;
He reads with a warning voice to age,
And whispers a lesson to youth.

A year has fled o'er heart and head
Since last the yule log burnt;
And we have a task to closely ask,
What the bosom and brain have learnt?

Oh! let us hope that our sands
have run
With wisdom's precious grains;
Oh! may we find that our hands
have done
Some work of glorious pains.
Then a welcome and cheer to the
merry new year,
While the holly gleams above us;
With a pardon for the foes who
hate,
And a prayer for those who love
us."

Jessica Maria Alecia
Historic Site Manager, Rippon Lodge
Historic Site



JANUARY

FIRST DAY HIKE

6 Months+ | Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park

1/1 | 1p-2:30p | Wed | Free

FEBRUARY

LUCASVILLE SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Ages 6+ | Lucasville School Historic Site

2/1 | 11a-3p | Sat | Free

BRENTSVILLE BLACK HISTORY MONTH TOURS

Ages 9+ | Brentsville Courthouse Historic Site

2/8 | 11a & 2p | Sat | \$5

TASTES OF HOME: AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND AMERICAN CUISINE

Ages 10+ | Ben Lomond Historic Site

2/15 | 11a-3p | Sat | \$20

MARCH



WOMEN OF RIPPON LODGE

Ages 12+ | Rippon Lodge

3/8 | 11a-12p | Sat | \$5

3/8 | 2p-3p | Sat | \$5

PRINCE WILLIAM AND MANASSAS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

Ages 10+ | Manassas Museum

3/22 | 8:30a-4p | Sat | \$10

HISTORIC HOMES OF PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY BUS TOUR

Ages 10+ | Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre

3/23 | 11a-4p | Sun | \$50

Preservation Corner

Bristoe Station Corncrib Rehabilitation

Bristoe Station was devastated by the Civil War. Two battles were fought there and both armies encamped there for months throughout between 1861 and 1865. Fence lines disappeared, soldiers hacked down trees, and buildings became victims of war. There are no Civil War-era structures remaining in Bristoe Station. Lately, our maintenance staff did spend months working on a post-Civil War era building at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park: the Bristoe Station Corncrib.

Decades ago, Prince William County was largely an agricultural community. Farmers benefitted from two railroads that traversed the county to bring their crops to wider markets. The Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which passed through Bristoe Station, was one of these rail lines. But trains did not stop at every farm along the tracks. Instead, farmers used a series of crude roads that crisscrossed their farms to get their goods to the nearest rail stations. Before depositing their products on a train car, they had to be measured and weighed and sometimes stored. The corncrib at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park served the purpose of allowing farmers to bring their goods to Bristoe Station and store them there.

Architectural historians date the building's construction to the 1880s. The corncrib is two stories tall and contains two main holding rooms that were initially



HP staff

The restoration of the Bristoe Station Corncrib in progress.

used for corn storage but later converted to storing grain. A lean-to addition on the side nearest the railroad still contains the scales used to weigh a farmer's product.

Using reclaimed timber from a barn recently torn down in Prince William County, staff restored the corncrib to its 19th century appearance. They replaced rotting wood, shored up the structure's

foundations and supports, and painted it the familiar red that is common on farm structures.

There is still more work to be done to learn the history of the building, but it will continue to stand as a testament to future generations of the county's agricultural roots

Kevin Pawlak

Historic Site Manager,
Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park



HP staff

The Winter Hut at Bristoe Station.

Winter Hut

The Winter Hut at Bristoe Station is finally coming along. We have had regular volunteers from the LDS Church who have been helping us. We are about to finish the last course (stack) of logs, then we will begin working on the roof and chinking of the logs.

Small Arms Safety Officers

Ben Lomond/Bristoe Station site manager Kevin Pawlak and Brentsville Courthouse historic interpreter J. Nathan McDonald were recertified



HP staff

Historic Weapons Safety Officers Nathan McDonald (left) and Kevin Pawlak (right).

as 19th century small arms safety officers in November at Camp Butner, NC. This class teaches handling, technical information, safety, and training methods for black powder weapons every four years. This makes sure demonstrations at our sites stay relevant, authentic, and safe.



HP staff

Haislip-Hall House at Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre.

Haislip-Hall House

The Haislip-Hall House will look different next time you stop by Brentsville Courthouse. Having finished a week of needed repairs, it also emerges with a fresh coat of paint! Historically it would have been either whitewashed, a mixture of slaked lime and water, or painted a shade of white, both for looks and to help preserve the siding.

Floor Cloths

Two Reproduction 18th Century Floor Cloths were installed at Rippon Lodge – Thank you to Bill Pishock, Owner, Two Guys Antiques for sponsoring the purchase of the floor cloths.

Dan Goldstein

Historic Interpreter



HP staff

The floor cloth in the parlor at Rippon Lodge.



HP staff

The floor cloth in the central passage with the cloth artist Grace Rochford.

PRINCE WILLIAM/MANASSAS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, March 22 | 8:30 – 4:00

Manassas Museum 9101 Prince William St., Manassas, VA 20110

Save the date for the 10th Annual Prince William/Manassas History Symposium! Each year local historians and experts explore the many facets of County history through a wide variety of lectures. Tickets are \$10 for an all-day program. The Symposium also marks the release of the Seventh issue of the Journal of Prince William County History, which will be on sale for the special one-day price of \$5.



2025 topics:

- John Sidebottom, African American Revolutionary War Soldier
- Dumfries Raid
- Gustav Friebus, the architect of Annaburg
- Wellington Community
- Rangers and Dragoons at the Old Stone House

PRINCE WILLIAM
Historic Preservation



Co-sponsored by the Manassas Museum, Prince William County Historical Commission, and Historic Prince William.

Historic Homes of Prince William County Bus Tour

Sunday, March 23, 2025

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m

As part of the 10th Annual Prince William/Manassas History Symposium, join us for the opportunity to tour private historic homes within Prince William County! Meet at Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre for transportation to three historic sites that are rarely open to the public. Lunch is included in ticket price and preregistration is required. One admission to the Symposium on March 22 is included in each bus tour ticket purchase. Tickets are \$50 per person; space is limited.



For more information about both of these programs contact 703-792-1731 or register online at www.pwcparks.info/hptickets

Connect with us on social media:

Facebook: www.Facebook.com/pwhistoric

X: @PWHPF

Instagram: PWC History